



The JAG Instructional Digest

August 24, 2015

What is the JAG Instructional Digest?

Newsletter for sharing instructional tidbits and resources.

How often will the digest be released?

Every 3 weeks

Can I submit something for the digest?

Absolutely. If you find an article or resource that would benefit other teachers, please email the information to awiggins@mesquiteisd.org

Dear Instructional Coach...

If you have questions about instruction or ideas you want to try and need guidance, email your question to IstarnesI@mesquiteisd.org, and our instructional coach will answer your question in the next newsletter.

The Scratch Instructional Focus

This year our Instructional Focus will center around our BHAGs and Continuous Improvement and will change every three weeks.

An Instructional Focus is something for you to intentionally plan to incorporate into your lessons for the next three weeks. An Instructional Focus is a best practice that will enhance your student's skills and engagement in your class and across the curriculum.

We track instructional focus use during Campus Walk Throughs in the classroom. But don't worry, if you're not in the middle of your instructional focus activity when an administrator comes into your room, you won't be penalized. Please have evidence of your instructional focus activity written into your lesson frame.

The instructional focus for the next three weeks is:

Critical Writing

Critical writing is when students are asked to reflect, explain, describe, defend, etc. a process or concept in writing in paragraph form.

An easy way to work critical writing into your lesson is by having students reflect in writing during a bellringer or warm up for the lesson. Have students answer in writing, "What do you already know about this topic? / Reflect on what we covered last class period. What questions do you still have? / Tell about a time you saw this concept happening in the real world or in your life./ etc."

Give students time to discuss their ideas with their classmates before/after writing.

Reminders:

- Update your PDAS Profile
- Prime Time=20/10
- HOT Questions are Essential to Every Lesson
- Close Every Lesson

Dear Instructional Coach, What Does It Mean to Educate?

The word *educate* comes from the Latin verb *educare*, relating to *educere* which means *to lead* or *to draw out*. I love this definition. What if we started using this definition more? You'd say things like, "*Kids, come get your drawing out for the day!*". While it sounds kind of funny, I feel we'd all agree that it sounds about right, too. Our job as an educator should be about drawing out the natural curiosity in our students, lesson-to-lesson, every single day...so I ask, how's that working out for you-how often are your kids on the edge of their seats impatiently begging you to teach the next piece of knowledge? If you just laughed at that like I did, then I want

to know why **is this such an unrealistic idea**? One theory I have is that nowadays, the word *educator* is often replaced with the word *expert*. (One who has *authoritative* knowledge.) Yes, we are the *experts* in the classroom, but I dare to ask, should that be our main, identifying role? Compare the original meaning of *educator* to the modern day meaning of *expert*. We were once defined as *those who lead students to their own answers*, but it seems as if now, we are *those who demand students to sit down and get their answers... because we have all of them*. Right? While I'm being a bit dramatic, am I really that far off from the truth? I've asked you this year

to focus on authenticity in the classroom, and here's a perfect opportunity to do so. Are you designing lessons and engaging students in a way that **draws** out or **drowns** out interest in your classroom? Between the pressures of state testing and prescribed curriculum, I know as a teacher, it's easy to just move into that authoritative teaching state-of-mind. However, if it matters to us that our students grow both academically and personally, we must unclench our fists as experts and open our paths again...to educate.

~Lacy
Starnes

LEP Instructional Toolshed

Tech Apps to help communicate with LEP Students:

iTranslate: Text Translator and Dictionary (Free)

myLanguage Pro: Voice and Text translator (4.99)



We will highlight instructional activities and students engaged in learning.

EXCELENCE ALWAYS 1:1

Poverty Fact of the Week

“A child’s vocabulary is part of his or her brain’s toolkit for learning, memory, and cognition.”

—Eric Jensen

Staff Development News

First Year 101

This course is designed for beginning classroom teachers at every level. We will focus on providing support on a variety of topics: classroom management, lesson design, instructional strategies, and more!

Dates:

Thursday, October 8 (PDC

Leadership Room)

Thursday, October 29 (PDC Leadership Room)

Thursday, November 19 (PDC room 211)

Thursday, December 10 (PDC Leadership Room)

Time: 4:30-7:45

Presenters: Jane Traugott, Joyce Wascom, Debi Tanton

SRN: 15338101 (See Flyer for More Info)